



**Committee on  
Homeland Security Democrats  
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member**

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**CONGRESSMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON DEMANDS AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
ADMINISTRATION'S RECOVERY OF THE DECEASED VICTIMS OF KATRINA**

WASHINGTON—Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, today expressed alarm over reports that federal officials are mishandling the recovery of victims killed by Hurricane Katrina.

In a letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, Rep. Thompson asked for an explanation for the breakdown in federal command and control over such an important and sensitive operation.

“We cannot ignore the fact civilized nations are judged by how they treat those who cannot speak for themselves,” said Rep. Thompson. “How we as a country treat Americans who have suffered the loss of a loved one because of this disaster says a lot about us—and so far the report is very disappointing and should not be tolerated.”

The Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) typically rely on the volunteer assistance of the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) in these situations. In addition to DMORT volunteers, the Department of Defense was also called in to handle the situation. The Army Corps of Engineers awarded Kellogg, Brown, and Root an \$800,000 contract to handle mortuary operations.

While several groups have been involved in handling the recovery of Hurricane Katrina victims, reports are that the recovery is not occurring in a timely manner. Rep. Thompson is requesting that the Department answer several questions, including who is in charge of DMORT operations and what is KBR's role in these operations.

“The families and friends of the deceased are having too many problems getting the information they need so they can honor those they have lost. This should not be happening in America.”

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